

Nuclear Condemnation Fight Led by Spellman

VATICAN CITY, Dec. 4 (UPI) — Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York led a last-minute campaign today to block the Ecumenical Council's condemnation of nuclear stockpiling.

With nine other archbishops, three of whom also are American, Cardinal Spellman circulated a letter saying such condemnation "will certainly hurt the cause of freedom in the world."

Lawrence Joseph Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore joined in circulating the letter, but later changed his mind and voted for the condemnation. He explained that he had joined the campaign hurriedly and had not had time to read the circular.

"The possession of nuclear arms has preserved freedom for a very large portion of the world," the letter said and urged the bishops to vote down the condemnation which some U.S. prelates felt was an attack on American nuclear policy.

The letter was circulated today shortly before the Council voted on the statement.

Results of the vote were not announced, but Council sources doubted that the lobbying campaign was sufficient to defeat the measure which appeared to have the support of most prelates.

The statement does not mention the United States by name. It condemns in general terms the concept of nuclear threats to prevent wars.

The statement on nuclear arms was in the Council's church-in-the-modern-world decree, on which the prelates in St. Peter's Basilica took 12 votes. Results of only five were announced, but they did not include the ballots on the warfare section nor on a controversial birth control declaration. Voting will be completed on Monday.

Archbishop John Francis Dearden of Detroit, Mich., and Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia Gerald Incent McDevitt reported that the U.S. hierarchy as a whole had not backed the circular against the nuclear condemnation.